

b.) Amendment to the Claims:

Claims 1-5 (Cancelled)

6. (Currently Amended) ~~A liver~~ A method for producing a liver function protecting or improving ~~agent~~ agent, which comprises, ~~as an active ingredient, a filtrate obtained by extracting with alcohol or water containing alcohol an extract residue, wherein said extract residue is obtained by extracting a plant of the family Saxifragaceae with an aqueous medium, and filtering the resulting extract to remove the filtrate~~ (1) extracting a plant of the genus *Hydrangea* with an aqueous medium and filtering the resulting extract to remove the filtrate and obtain an extract residue, and (2) extracting the extract residue with alcohol or water containing alcohol to obtain said agent.

Claims 7-15 (Cancelled)

16. (Currently Amended) ~~A food~~ A method for producing a food or drink having liver function protecting or improving activity, which comprises, ~~as an active ingredient, a filtrate obtained by extracting with alcohol or water containing alcohol an extract residue, wherein said extract residue is obtained by extracting a plant of the family Saxifragaceae with an aqueous medium, and filtering the resulting extract to remove the filtrate~~ (1) extracting a plant of the genus *Hydrangea* with an aqueous medium and

filtering the resulting extract to remove the filtrate and obtain an extract residue, (2)  
extracting the extract residue with alcohol or water containing alcohol to obtain an extract  
with liver function protecting or improving activity, and (3) adding the extract obtained in  
step (2) to a food or drink.

Claims 17-23 (Cancelled)

24. (Currently Amended) ~~A feed~~ A method for producing a feed having  
liver function protecting or improving activity, which comprises, as an active ingredient, a  
filtrate obtained by extracting with alcohol or water containing alcohol an extract residue,  
wherein said extract residue is obtained by extracting a plant of the family Saxifragaceae  
with an aqueous medium, and filtering the resulting extract to remove the filtrate (1)  
extracting a plant of the genus *Hydrangea* with an aqueous medium and filtering the  
resulting extract to remove the filtrate and obtain an extract residue, (2) extracting the  
extract residue with alcohol or water containing alcohol to obtain an extract having liver  
function protecting or improving activity, and (3) adding the extract obtained in step (2) to  
a feed.

Claims 25-30 (Cancelled)

31. (Currently Amended) ~~An additive~~ A method for producing an additive for food or drink having liver function protecting or improving activity, which comprises; ~~as an active ingredient, a filtrate obtained by extracting with alcohol or water containing alcohol an extract residue, wherein said extract residue is obtained by extracting a plant of the family Saxifragaceae with an aqueous medium, and filtering the resulting extract to~~ remove the filtrate (1) extracting a plant of the genus *Hydrangea* with an aqueous medium and filtering the resulting extract to remove the filtrate and obtain an extract residue, and (2) extracting the extract residue with alcohol or water containing alcohol to obtain said additive.

Claims 32-36 (Cancelled)

37. (Currently Amended) A method for protecting liver function from damage from excessive intake of alcohol, or for improving liver function impaired from intake of alcohol, which comprises administering, to a human in need thereof, an effective amount of an extract obtained by a process which comprises (1) extracting a plant of *Hydrangea macrophylla* Seringe var. *Thunbergii* Makino or *Hydrangea Dulcis* Folium with an aqueous medium and filtering the resulting extract to remove the filtrate and obtain an extract residue, and (2) extracting the extract residue with alcohol or water containing alcohol to obtain an extract with said liver function protection or improving ability. ~~active ingredient comprising a filtrate obtained by extracting with alcohol or water containing alcohol an extract residue, wherein said extract residue is obtained by extracting~~

~~Hydrangea macrophylla Seringe var. Thunbergii Makino or Hydrangea Dulcis Folium with an aqueous medium, and filtering the resulting extract to remove the filtrate.~~

38. (Currently Amended) ~~A feed~~ A method for producing a feed additive having liver function protecting or improving activity, which comprises, ~~as an active ingredient, a filtrate obtained by extracting with alcohol or water containing alcohol an extract residue, wherein said extract residue is obtained by extracting a plant of the family Saxifragaceae with an aqueous medium, and filtering the resulting extract to remove the filtrate~~ (1) extracting a plant of the genus *Hydrangea* with an aqueous medium and filtering the resulting extract to remove the filtrate and obtain an extract residue having said liver function or improvement ability, and (2) extracting the extract residue with alcohol or water containing alcohol to obtain said feed additive.

Claims 39-42 (Cancelled)

43. (Currently Amended) A method ~~of~~ for protecting liver function from damage from excessive intake of alcohol, or for improving liver function impaired from intake of alcohol, in an animal, which comprises administering, to an animal in need thereof, an effective amount of an extract obtained by a process which comprises ~~an active ingredient comprising a filtrate obtained by extracting with alcohol or water containing alcohol an extract residue, wherein said extract residue is obtained by extracting a plant of~~

~~the family Saxifragaceae with an aqueous medium, and filtering the resulting extract to remove the filtrate~~ (1) extracting a plant of the genus *Hydrangea* with an aqueous medium and filtering the resulting extract to remove the filtrate and obtain an extract residue, and (2) extracting the extract residue with alcohol or water containing alcohol to obtain said extract, said extract having said liver function protection or improving ability.

44. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 43, wherein the animal is a human.

Claims 45-49 (Cancelled)

50. (Currently Amended) ~~A food; A method for producing a food or drink or feed for protection or improvement of liver function~~ A method for producing a food or drink ~~ingredient comprising a filtrate obtained by extracting with alcohol or water containing alcohol an extract residue, wherein said extract residue is obtained by extracting a plant of the family Saxifragaceae with an aqueous medium, and filtering the resulting extract to remove the filtrate~~ (1) extracting a plant of the genus *Hydrangea* with an aqueous medium and filtering the resulting extract to remove the filtrate and obtain an extract residue, (2) extracting the extract residue with alcohol or water containing alcohol to obtain an extract having said liver function protection or improvement ability, and (3) adding the extract obtained in step (2) to a food or drink.

Claims 51-58 (Cancelled).